

AFTER GODS HEART

For the week of February 8th, 2026

The Ark of the Covenant

Life

When things go wrong in your life, what is usually your first instinct: to ask why it's happening, or to try to fix it quickly?

Can you think of a time when something you relied on for security failed you? How did that experience shape you?

Theology

Read 1 Samuel 4:1-10.

- Why did Israel believe bringing the Ark into battle would guarantee victory, even though their relationship with God was broken? Why did that belief fail them and where do we see similar forms of spiritual superstition today?

In **1 Samuel 4:11-22**, we see the death of Eli, the death of Phinehas' wife, and the naming of a parentless child. What does this section of the story represent about the state of Ancient Israel? (Ichabod)

While Israel is experiencing a season of devastation, God is actually preparing a better future for them. Have you ever endured a season like that? Where your life was emptied, and yet, behind the scenes, the Lord was preparing something incredible for you?

How does the death at Beth Shemesh in **1 Samuel 6:19-20** show that God's holiness applies to Israel just as much as to the Philistines? What theological impact does this have on our faith?

in **1 Samuel 7**, What are the striking differences about the way that Israel faces another Philistine threat, as compared to what unfolded in chapter 4?

In **1 Samuel 7:3-4**, Samuel calls Israel to put away foreign gods and return to the Lord. What might similar rhythms of repentance look like in our modern lives?

Israel's victory in **1 Samuel 7:10** comes after *surrender*, not *strategy*. Where might God be inviting you to *trust* rather than *control*?

Close by having a volunteer read Hannah's doxology (1 Samuel 2:1-10) out loud, while everyone else in your group listens. What do you notice about Hannah's prayer this time around? What words, phrases, or ideas are you drawn to? Why do you think that is?

Close in prayer.

In Practice

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

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Last Week's "One Thing": _____.

Israel's "Secret" Weapon: _____.

- It was the most _____ object in Israel's life.
- It represented God's _____.
- It was how Israel experienced the _____ among them.

When the Philistines captured the Ark, the foundations of Israel's identity _____. Their sense of _____, _____, and _____ was _____.

WB: "The ark no longer guarantees Israel's _____."

God is not gone, but He will not be _____.

One Thing:

_____.

"The ark narrative functions for Israel as an offer of _____; this self-starting God can work a newness in the face of every seeming defeat." WB

When facing another battle against the Philistines in 1 Samuel 7, Israel stops wielding the Ark and instead places it in a posture of of _____ and _____ while practicing _____ and _____.

"His _____, or _____?"